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AUTHOR	Trautman, DeForest L.
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ABSTRACT

A summary of a workshop on state-level issues and responses relating to postsecondary education is presented as part of an inservice education program. Perspectives on the role of the state agency and its interface between the statewide education system and the governmental and external bodies that influence it are considered. It is suggested that the many problems confronting the state agency appear to cluster in three ways: (1) concerns over the actual survival of the higher education system as it has been; (2) the acknowledgement that the system no longer solves internal problems primarily generated internally, since problems appear from external groups (e.g., governments and unions); and (3) the realization that the state agency must deal with its own agency behavior. Agency response to these clusters of problems may be viewed as clusters of actions, or strategies, techniques, and tools. Two worksheets are presented, one for problems and the other for actions. Observations made by participants are organized along several dimensions. For the problem worksheet, problems of state-level leadership and state-level issues and challenges are indicated for each of the three problem areas (survival, external initiatives, and agency behavior). Additionally, examples based on participants' observations are displayed for each problem area. The worksheet on actions or responses are grouped under four broad content clusters (social, cognitive, skill, and personal) and more specific subcategories, and are linked to strategies, techniques, and tools. In addition, perspectives on data and analyses and implications for state agency problem solving are presented. A summary of a focused group discussion that addressed problems/actions of specific states and common problems is included. (SW

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POST-WORKSHOP ANALYSIS

DeFOREST L. "WOODY" TRAUTMAN
Director
Office of Long Range Planning
State University of New York at Stony Brook

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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Inservice Education Program (IEP)
Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80295

SHEEO

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POST-WORKSHOP ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This workshop attempted to measure some of the new dimensions of postsecondary education and, and at the same time, equip state agency staffers with effective means to confront related daily problems. As the worth of a meal is not only in the eating but also in the following digestion, so also for this workshop. Perhaps because of the newness and generality of guidelines for state agencies per se, this post-analysis hopefully will integrate and enhance the value of the workshop presentations.

A workshop takes form in response to perceived needs for new knowledges and skills for a particular group of professionals. A theme appears, then a program structure, and finally, commitments by speakers and potential attendees. During the actual workshop, the convener adapts the format moment-by-moment to maintain intended focus and to try to provide what the participants expect. With many diverse program ingredients, and the natural proclivities of speakers to lecture on their own pet topics, it is remarkable that a program did actually "hang together" to propound "tools, techniques, and strategies." Pre-workshop publicity and the program agenda gave a "forecast" of what to expect; this post-workshop "aftcast" tells one perception of what happened. Of course, each of us attendees has his/her own recollections, notes, and fragmentary evaluations. The following then are the writer's own, bolstered by his review of the transcripts and his recall of "corridor conversations," where appropriate.

This analysis is offered firstly to illustrate how the workshop addressed its theme. Secondly, it offers a structure for each reader's own review of the presentations so that one might incorporate more easily these "tools, techniques, and strategies" in one's own "response to problems of state-level leadership."

The workshop consisted of various formal presentations followed by ample discussion from the floor, of small discussion groups, of consultations with resource persons and, of course, of continuous corridor conversations. Attempting to determine afterwards the ensuing focii of these many inputs is fraught with the uncertainty of there actually being any such focii! Workshop value is, of course, not measurable solely in terms of focii, but is such are

discernable, the ensuing structuring of information is indeed helpful. This analysis uses the formal presentations as principal input, but also does not shun the informal inputs. Each analyst, therefore, might derive a different structure, but hopefully the messages would be similar.

The content and results of this workshop analysis appear as two worksheets with their explanations. For elaboration of the entries--the observations of the participants--the interested reader should consult the full transcripts of the separate presentations which follow in these proceedings. Program content was one workshop objective; the other was "putting it all together." This latter was the function of the State Fair, the small group sessions, and "corridor talk." This post-workshop analysis summarizes activities and outcomes under the topics (a) workshop analysis via worksheets, (b) elaboration of data/analyses actions and (c) summary of a work group discussion.

PART I

WORKSHOP ANALYSIS VIA WORKSHEETS

Strategies, techniques, and tools often form a continuum from the general to the specific, from the long range to the immediate. Also, the introduction of a tool can have strategic motives, and the role and maturity of the state agency may influence terminology and use. So also specific problems may be addressed by similar or contrasting strategies, techniques, and tools.

Moreover, because the state-level leadership context varies widely from state-to-state, a strategy in one can be a technique or tool in another. Therefore, the content of the program presentations requires classification not only in terms of tools, techniques, and strategies per se, but also in terms of issues and challenges with which state agencies must deal . . . and, in fact, many presenters dealt extensively with their perceptions of such contexts.

A brief summary of the state agency "situation" appears next as prelude to the clustering rationale. Then follow the two worksheets and their explanations dealing with problems and actions.

The State Agency

The state agency represents the interface between the statewide education system and the governmental and external bodies which would influence it. It must both advocate the budget and require accountability. Many presenters referred to the essential and herculean task of knowing and understanding these various constituencies and roles. For example, the faculty member is fearful that his multifaceted activities and joint products are not understood and that data solicited may also prove to be insensitive to them; and the institutions also are fearful of misunderstandings. Thus, intimate knowledge of role, scope, and dynamics of the institutions is both strategy to build toward confidence in agency activity and tool to aid specific agency operations. With the widening scope of postsecondary education, agency staffers must broaden their knowledge base to encompass the proprietary and work environment sectors as well. And, of

course, the basic (not superficial) knowledge requirement further extends to the increasing number of external bodies having a prime interest in the educational system.

On the other side of the interface, governmental involvement has assumed such a complexity and intensity as to require full knowledge of processes and intents by the agency just to keep abreast of increasing and realistic governmental initiatives, let alone pave the way for the agency's own initiatives. The complexity of the decision environment not only embraces deeper involvement of legislatures and the congress, but also the executive and judicial branches. The state agency--as a relatively new arrival on this expanding scene--clearly must acquire knowledges and develop skills heretofore unknown in handling the affairs of postsecondary education. And the sooner such acquisitions, the sooner the state agency will regain or reinforce its function of managing, and correctly interpret the public interest in postsecondary education as a service rather than an institution.

Clustering of Problems and Actions

In retrospect, the many problems besetting the state agency appeared to cluster three ways. First, grave concerns were expressed over the actual "survival" of the higher education system as it has been. The pressures of deflation appear everywhere from resources to esteem as well as markedly shifting goals and clienteles; also, the conventional components are regrouping. Thus, the state agency faces a whole host of problems as the advocate of the postsecondary education system (whatever that is). Second, the system no longer solves internal problems primarily generated internally. Problems appear from the external social context, and external groups (e.g., governments and unions), are rapidly assuming significant decision initiatives. These "external initiatives" comprise a second cluster of problems for the state agency. And third, the state agency must wrestle with its own "agency behavior." As a relative newcomer, its tenets of professionalism and decison role are still in formation. What about staff parity with education and government counterparts? What expertises are essential and what roles are expected? Participants at the workshop were chiefly from the staff ranks and displayed great concern over these matters.

Agency response to these clusters of problems may be viewed as clusters of actions. Such actions, or strategies, techniques, and tools, are viewed as a continuum along one dimension and clustered content-wise along another. The broad content clusters are social, cognitive, skill, and

personal, indicative of the broad action areas that the state agency should cover. The virtues of participatory processes, timing, and communication appeared to be necessary social actions in every state. In the realm of cognitive actions, the manifold issues and challenges of the problems clusters emphasize the necessity of a broad knowledge base and expertise with policy planning methods.

Data management and pertinent studies/analyses often assume prime importance. Skill action in these areas may underwrite state agency success or failure. And finally, professional self-confience, i.e., personal actions, must be emphasized during state agency maturation. Issues and challenges must be met by persons, who, having the requisite professional expertise, must themselves put it into practice.

In this analysis, two worksheets are developed, one for problems, the other for actions. These address the two main topics of discussion elaborated above, problems and actions, and they organize the observations made by the participants along dimensions which were not necessarily explicit during the workshop. In using both Worksheets A and B, the reader should remember that these are not analyses of related research studies, with overall hypotheses under test. They are pictorial clusterings of seemingly related experiences, attitudes and action suggestions by a group of independent presenters from as many different states and agency contexts.

Explanation of Worksheet A - Problems

In its left-hand column headed "Forecast," Worksheet A depicts the overall organization of the workshop according to modules of the program agenda. Note also the numbering of the authors for later reference. The central column headed "Aftcast" clusters topics which emerged from actual presentations and discussions at the workshop. Several different groupings were tried (without influence from the module topics) in arriving at survival, external initiatives, and agency behavior (together with illustrative sub-topics). Note that in retrospect the modules of the left-hand column cluster reasonably well the same way. However, the reader should note that the Forecast employs titles and the Aftcast employs content topics. A given module presentation often covered a number of topics and so item-by-item correspondences between the two columns should not be expected. However, by aggregations, the "Issues and Challenges" which emerged did, indeed, cover the anticipated problems.

The third column displays "Example Participant Observations" on a continuum from general to specific. Many of

WORKSHEET A – Problems

	FORECAST PROBLEMS OF STATE LEVEL LEADERSHIP	AFTCAST STATE LEVEL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES	EXAMPLE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS * GENERAL ⟷ SPECIFIC
A. SURVIVAL	6. Dealing with Dwindling Resources [Martorana (6)] 4. Problems Clinic – Where Do We Turn For Help? [Noel (4a), Schlesinger (4b), Ivens (4c), Lichtman (4d), Fife (4e), Cramber (4f)] 1. Information Related Problems in State Planning [Hollander (1)]	Clientele, resources and programs Instruction, research and service (I/R/S) Public, private and proprietary External questions and internal fears System metamorphoses and goals Fiscal uncertainties Internecine institutional conflicts	survival crisis (6) tension resulting from dwindling money (2),(6),(9) . . . drop in public confidence (6) . . . and students (2),(9) how to maintain the triad I/R/S together (6) protect private sector (1),(7a) (8) need more optimism in PSE (3),(6),(7a) move toward learning society during retrenchment (7a) public wants education, not institutional survival (7a) cannibalistic conduct within universities (1),(5a) regional veto over new programs (6),(7a)
B. EXTERNAL INITIATIVES	7/8. Problems and Issues Related to Legislative Processes: Part I–State, Part II–Federal [Riebman (7a), Andrews (7b), Andringa (8)] 3. External Interest Group Impingements [Millard (3)]	State legislative involvements Federal influences Policy making by the courts External interest group impingements Accountability and quality seeking Consumer protection and collective bargaining Licensure and accreditation Institutional vs educational interests	government initiatives (3) indirect and spillover effects (3) intensive role of state in education (9) melange of Federal programs (8) congressional interest sagging (8) Fed. don't hear from state legislature nor agencies (8) increasing educational qualifications for licensing (9) unions decrease system flexibility (3),(9) legislative studies of education (7a) Fed. struggle for accreditation/certification (8) Federal Trade Commission actions (3)
C. AGENCY BEHAVIOR	9. New Assumptions for State Level Leadership in the Future [Mautz (9)] 5. State Agency Relationships [McCarthy (5a), Porter (5b)] 2. Problems and Issues Related to the Data Game [Huff (2)]	Forces and expectations Policyplanning initiatives Dialectical advocacy Staff expertise and parity Decision role and operational activities Political interaction and anticipation	wide demand for data and studies (2) a cause will lose against raw political power (5a) Dual role: adversary/advocate (5a),(5b) how to hold private educ. accountable (1) how to work with legislators (7b) composition of governing boards (3) privacy of information (3) misuse of data (2) competition with other social services (8) who to communicate with in institutions (5b)

* NOTE: Number is key to module/presentor. Reading of formal paper will, in most instances, reveal the idea although in a few cases, the idea came during discussion.

WORKSHEET B – Actions

ACTIONS

EXAMPLE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS *

		STRATEGIES ⟷	TECHNIQUES	⟷ TOOLS
A. SOCIAL	1. Participatory Processes and Timing	establish simbiotic relations (5a) initiate legislative program before session (8),(7a) work with all agencies, courts and unions keep arguments in logic arena (5a)	time agency initiatives with regard for legislative reactions (7b) determine power bases and employ persuasion (8) regionalize and share(6)	recognize raw political power (5a) broaden policy input base (7a) seek opinions from attorney general (5b),(6) furnish requested data at once (1),(2)
	2. Communications	be advocate of education (8) quality of interactions (2) work through legislative staffs (8) use various institutional administrative echelons (1)	must educate Fed's (7b) get to legislators (7b) contact institutions only at dean's level and above (5b) strengthen ties with state (7), and Fed's (8)	help state budget officer (5b) understand governmental bureaucracy (8) work through external elite groups (3)
B. COGNITIVE	1. Knowledge	educational system expertise vs agency staff (5a) faculty joint project and personal fears (2) political processes and the courts (5a) external groups (4)	decisions often made on non-data bases (1) funding formulas (2) legislative processes (8)	workshop ECS handout congressional contacts data sheet (9) NEXUS, NCHEMS and other data groups (4a-f)
	2. Policyplanning Methods (alternatives/consequences/evaluations)	sense what is "do-able" politically (7a),(8) focus on ultimate decision needs (3)	resource allocation methods (6) realistic fitting of programs to resources (2) anticipate potential impacts	consider the "oughts" (2) simulations (2) realistic data bases (1)
C. SKILL	1. Data Management	data not neutral (2) refuse to provide data (2)	from (new) goal develop measures then collect data (1) ways to misuse data (1),(2) NCHEMS software (1),(7a) data organization chart (1) target MIS development on required decisions (2)	NEXUS, etc. (4a-f) test new questions with mock data (1)
	2. Analyses	test data for relevance to question (1) be anticipatory (2)	do special and anticipatory studies (1) understand power bases (5a),(7b)	simplify funding forumlas (2) determine readiness (7a)
D. PERSONAL	1. Professional self-confidence	select management control or political control (5a,(5b),(7b) keep ahead of legislature (3),(8) strong boards have performed well (9),(7b) recapture public esteem for higher education (7a),(7b)	establish staff parity actually or de facto (2)	professional diplomacy mediate between universities and legislature (5a),(5b),(9)
	2. Professional Commitment	maintain perseverance (5a),(5b)	keep open communications (9) establish credibility for professional objectivity (8)	have understanding spouse (7a) be independently wealthy (9)

* NOTE: Number is key to module/presentor. Reading of formal paper will, in most instances, reveal the idea although in a few cases, the idea came during discussion.

these are keyed to an author and approximate page number (see first column). These are not quotes and, in some cases, represent a combination of similar thoughts by more than one author. Nor are they intended to be exhaustive nor analytical, but rather supportive of the first two columns and also suggestive, such that the reader might add his own recollections or experiences.

Explanation of Worksheet B - Actions

Worksheet B organizes the content of the presentations along a continuum from Strategies through Techniques and Tools. These are the actions of interest to agency staff in facing the Issues and Challenges depicted on Worksheet A, and of course, address the first part of the workshop title. The presence of entries on this worksheet, therefore, illustrate another dimension of the correspondence between Aftcast and Forecast. These entries are keyed in the same format as for Worksheet A, and the same caveats apply. As there, the reader should add his own recollections or experiences.

A word on the method of clustering may be helpful, especially because this is the last of several trials, and it may appear unfamiliar to the reader. First of all, the "observations" of the participants often were couched as exhortations rather than as results of substantive and generalizable experiences. And many were clearly applicable in one state but not another. Furthermore, a strategy today may become a tool tomorrow, or vice-versa. This amount of variability almost defies charting, and rather suggests referring the reader solely to the full transcripts and his/her own contextual referents.

However, the search continued by pumping strategies/techniques/tools, and referencing them to the Issues and Challenges of Worksheet A. The resultant format introduced both redundancy and non-uniqueness (either general applicability or application not specified by the participant), so clustering the whole collection of examples was attempted and this approach finally yielded these Actions: Social, Cognitive, Skill, and Personal, with their subdivisions shown as the left-hand columns of Worksheet B. The reader may wish to move some items around and should feel free to do so. The two-dimensional format, even with its limitations, is still a better display for this information than are separate lists.

PART II

ELABORATION OF DATA/ANALYSIS ACTIONS

The saying "one fact is worth a thousand opinions" is suggestive of the profound role played by data and subsequent analyses in the daily work of the state agency, from monitoring the attainment of current goals to forecasting, policy-planning, and budgeting for new ones. Data leading to information are in a sense both the end and beginning of agency activity. They reflect agency issues and challenges and present interesting opportunities for exploitation of strategies, techniques, and tools. Half of the workshop agenda was devoted to the specifics of the "Data Game" and most of the presenters had some observation to make, whether aligned with issues and challenges or with strategies, techniques, and tools. Whereas, Worksheets A and B treat state agency problems and actions in a global fashion, this section singles out the data/analysis sector for further specific elaboration. Although it is chiefly action-oriented, it does have policy problems which pose issues and challenges. As above, this text is meant only to be "suggestively integrative" of what transpired at the workshop and not exhaustive of the topics.

Wider View

Data/analyses have conventionally pertained chiefly to general studies of enrollment, instructional and financial operational data. Current studies are focussed more on specific decision objectives and involve additional kinds of data and analyses. A wider range of socioeconomic data is necessary, encompassing also major issues and arguments, and pertinent political bases of power. The relatively new data and methods pertaining to possible futures relate closely to policy planning. And the increasing emphasis on accountability and institutional effectiveness brings to the fore newer management techniques developed in business and industry as suggestive for state agency operations internally and vis-a-vis the institutions in the system. Furthermore, an open system was generally proposed, with an emphasis on effective communications at all levels, both intra- and inter-agency.

But the open system is not without its problems. Another facet of the wider view stressed at the workshop embraced secrecy, disclosure, and availability, citing current federal and state legislation. Also cited as a potential problem was the increasing demand by government for new data, notably affirmative action (increased employment/enrollment statistics) and accountability (possibly follow-up of graduates). These new demands put a large strain on agency and institution data capabilities and agency must therefore be carefully considered. Suggested were special ad hoc studies (rather than augmenting the general ongoing data capture), streamlining and, where necessary, citing the costs involved (sometimes tantamount to saying "No").

The wider view must be accommodated, yet with expertise.

Analyses

Although data commonly feed analyses, speaking further about analyses first serves to emphasize the workshop point that the purposes for collecting data must be clearly understood in advance. This was carried a step further in the suggestion that mock data be used to check both the likely influence on the impending decision and the effectiveness of the data collection instrument. Other purposes of data were suggested to be the monitoring of progress toward goals, accountability, and planning. Such purposes set the stage for the kinds of analyses to perform.

Another role of "analyses" (inclusive of syntheses and designs) is the generation of alternative courses of action. Attention shifts from "is" to "ought" and to the underlying dynamics of the sustem under study. Useful techniques embrace simulations and system parameters such as the Induced Course Load Matrix and Faculty (or Student) Transition Matrix. Much insight can be gained relatively straightforwardly, though many useful computer software packages are available from NCHEMS* and other organizations. Increasingly, institutional researchers are employing more sophisticated mathematical models, at least to structure their own thinking. The state agency should have access to appropriate analytical talent, whether in-house or as consultants or possibly via arrangements with faculty members within its system.

Data

The workshop heard numerous specific suggestions concerning the "Data Game" and "Data Management." Some agencies

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*National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

are able to operate their own computer data processing center containing tapes of operational data from member institutions; others cannot or wish not. The objective in any case is to have available the right data at the right time at the right cost. Workshop participants shared their own approaches and problems. The great value of quickly closing the loop back to the data source was stressed and of relating all data specifically to agency purposes. The great utility of using the HEGIS* taxonomy and NCHEMS procedures lay in their nationwide development and acceptance and reasonable guarantee of definitional and measurement compatibility.

Through formal and informal discussions, the workshop was reminded of quality attributes of data, ranging from misinterpretations by the supplier and his second-guessing what was sought, to unavailability, in whole or in part. Such matters are crucial to state agency posture for problem solving.

The seven presenters at the "State Fair" propounded the resources available (principally data) from their respective organizations. Under the intended program agenda, these data would be available to the problem solvers in the workshop small groups discussions.

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*Higher Education General Information Survey

PART III

SUMMARY OF A WORK GROUP DISCUSSION

Eight to ten persons representing New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Indiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina met for a total of three hours of focussed discussion. The charge was to select a problem/issue and seek tentative answers to the following questions: nature of problems/ issues, desired solution/situation, obstacles to be overcome, and means for overcoming.

Everyone was congenial and contributed, but interest was more in getting acquainted with each other and the situations in the other states than in following the letter of the charge. In part, this was because the time was too short to focus on a topic of manageable size, because the age/interests of the participants was too wide, and because too much background was necessary to develop first.

The ensuing "background discussion" did unveil a number of problems, several of which were then narrowed in a "focussed discussion." These discussions certainly reflected many of the items appearing on Worksheets A and B, and provided a good illustration of a potentially profitable workshop activity could more time have been allocated to it.

Background Discussion

To get everyone's concerns out on the table, each gave a brief sketch of the situtation in his state. In this reporting, the following "problems" were mentioned. These varied by state and by age/role of the participant. Order carries no significance. For example:

a - Student input: lacking or unorganized or where student is on a governing board, he/she may not be qualified. (Also the absence of a faculty trustee.)

b - Position the agency should take toward "unsound" legislation. Perhaps re-interpret legislative intent and influence its implementation.

c - The whole question of agency staff parity with institution staff, and types of visits to campuses (depends on whether agency is SED or BOR);

d - When and how to plan, given the crisis mode of the agency and the seeming irrational behavior of the decision makers;

e - Higher Education continues as the focus; the proprietary schools are not listened to;

f - Reversion to simple budget formulas does not stem from agency leadership as it should;

g - How to keep legislature from meddling in management of the education system;

h - How much does planning really affect the budget?

i - Accountability of overhead on research grants, a forthcoming "can of worms; and

j - Eliciting consensus on what education should be.

Focused Discussion

Attempts to draw a common problem from the background discussion led first to:

a - "Agency-Legislature Relations"

This problem cut a wide swath depending on the nature of the agency (its "powers") and the (historical) strengths of the institutions, as well as the styles of all "actors" and the de facto attitudes of everyone. In short, the topic was too big for headway in the hour or so remaining. The second problem attempted was:

b - "Moving Planning Where the Action Is"

The potentially good role of planning was illustrated by New York, both the Regents' goal setting and the consensus of the public/private organization. The planning and political processes were viewed as moving in parallel. But ad hoc behavior and the potential "power" of junior agency personnel were "awesome." The complexity of both internal and external forces rendered this topic too broad as well. The final problem focus became:

c - "Legislating Faculty Workload"

This topic was an effort to narrow scope still further, but actually it circled back to the first two topics! On the one hand, the agency could seemingly forestall legislative "meddling" by its anticipation of issues and prior briefing of legislators. But on the other, data appeared to be futile because of legislative "whim"--and the best approach was suggested to be simply to strive for the most generality in legislation and then to deal directly with implementation, even if (as in one state) the twelve-hour law is interpreted such that the audit shows everyone conforming!

Time ran out without sufficiently "solving the problem." Also, the group preferred general discussion over grappling in further depth with a specific problem. The members departed reasonably pleased with their interactions.

Had the group wished to pursue problem-solving, it might have generalized its total discussion according to the following format:

> Nature of Problem: Unhappiness with Agency-Legislature-Institution interrelationships.
>
> Desired Solution: Position of qualified leadership and influence.
>
> Obstacles: Lack of Agency staff parity, professional expertise and de juro role.
>
> Means to Overcome: Identification of professional components of Agency activity and solid in-service training. (Also salary help.)

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This concludes the Post-Workshop Analysis. After referring to the actual transcripts, readers might wish to edit the worksheets according to their own observations.